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## A PERFECT TREASURE.

I AM not a man to have hobbies—far from it—but everybody, I suppose, likes one thing more than another, and what I like is Plate; good serviceable gold and silver, such as is pleasant to see upon one's table, whether by sunshine or candle-light, and which one likes one's guests to see. It is whispered by malignant persons (so at least certain good-natured friends tell me), that I should not give so many dinner-parties, if it were not to exhibit these costly articles. I am not conscious of such a motive for my hospitality; but if it exist, it need not surely be objected to; it is I who have to pay for the weakness, and not my friends—as happens in some cases I could name. If I possessed a selection of the most hideous china in the whole world, and filled my drawing-rooms with unhappy persons *after* dinner, who are compelled to bow down before Bel and the Dragon (if I may say so without impiety), as Colonel Twankay does, for instance, *then* I grant you there would be some ground of complaint: or if I invited people to 'at-homes' every Wednesday evening (a most impertinent form of invitation, in my opinion), in order that they should have the pleasure of hearing me confute Professor Piebald upon the question of the Theory of Development, as my good friend Dr Twistie is in the habit of doing: or if I had a daughter with high notes, and inveigled the Unwary with the bait of 'a little music,' like my neighbour, the Hon. Mrs Matcham—so proud and stuck up, that she is as often as not called Lucifer Matcham—who, I dare say, thinks her invitations quite an honour to the recipients—But there; I have no patience to speak about such people. These, forsooth, are the persons—*these*, with their tea and thin bread and butter, and threepenny-worth of cream, and with what they call 'a light refreshment' to follow—weak lemonade and cheap ices—to charge me with the crime of Ostentation! If that means to 'shew off,' which, I believe, is its strictly classical sense, I should like to know which of us four is the most guilty. At all events, there is something *beside* show in my little entertain-

ments; my dishes, if they do happen to be silver-gilt (and really the moulding is worth looking at), have, at all events, something *in* them; I don't ask men to put on black broad-cloth and polished leather boots, in this sultry June, with nothing to come of it all except perspiration. That's vulgar, according to Mrs Matcham, I have no doubt; but it's true. If one could cool one's self by means of the frigidity of one's hostess, her drawing-room would be a very pleasant place; but as it is, I fancy folks prefer the contemplation of my ice-pails—as pretty a device in frosted silver, by the by, as you will often see.

Do not imagine that I am annoyed: towards persons who, when they *do* give a dinner-party, omit to supply ice in this weather (though it would cost them but one penny a head), I am incapable of such a feeling. Ostentation, indeed! At this very moment—11.30 P.M., and the thermometer next door at 85 degrees at the very least, I'll answer for it—I can hear Miss Lucifer Matcham screaming through the wall.

It was not looking at my gold and silver plate, I suppose, which made my mother-in-law bilious; she might have stopped a long time, at some other houses I could name, without getting the quality, or even the quantity, of food that would produce an indisposition of that kind. Mind, I don't blame her; she gave way to an amiable weakness (it was truffles), poor lady, and she suffered for it more than enough. Neither was it mere Ostentation, I suppose, that caused me to provide her with a sick-nurse—Mrs Maqueechy. My wife, of course, did everything she could for her mother, but ours is a large household, and we see a good deal of company; so we thought it best to provide a person exclusively to wait upon her. We had the highest written testimonials as to character, and her behaviour was everything we could wish. Instead of 'interfering,' and setting the other domestics by the ears, as persons of her class are accused of doing, she kept herself to herself, and when anything was wanted, she would fetch it in person, rather than give anybody trouble. I used to meet her walking all over the house upon these little

errands, and I noticed, to her great credit, that though she must have weighed nearly twelve stone, she made no noise. She so won upon me, indeed—for I am not at all a man to be familiar with my inferiors, and should certainly not 'take a pleasure in exhibiting my plate to a maid-of-all-work or a crossing-sweeper,' as some people have been so good as to affirm—I say, I was so pleased with Mrs Maqueechy's quiet and respectful manners, that finding her upon one occasion in the dining-room admiring my two new shield-shaped salvers upon the sideboard, I took pains to explain to her the design of the engraving, and especially the embossed cipher; with which her intelligent mind was highly pleased. In short, she was a perfect treasure, and if we had wanted a housekeeper, or any confidential servant of that sort, I should certainly have retained Mrs Maqueechy in that position, after her duties as a sick-nurse were concluded; and in that idea my wife entirely concurred. Mrs Maqueechy was neither young nor good-looking, but a more thoroughly respectable-looking person, in her condition of life, it was not easy to find. Although I had every confidence in Bowles—Bowles has had the charge of my plate for these ten years—yet there seemed somehow to be a double warranty for the safeguard of my property, while Mrs Maqueechy was under my roof. She was not a suspicious person, far from it; but she once remarked to me, in a meaning way, that the charge of so much valuable plate was a great responsibility, and would be even a temptation to some people; and I saw she kept her eye on Bowles. As the event proved, alas, Mrs Maqueechy had only too good reason to do so.

Last Wednesday, we happened to have rather a large dinner-party; I had been dining out a good deal at various clubs lately, and of course it was necessary to invite my entertainers in return. It is not that I will ask *anybody* to come and admire my plate, but certainly some of the men were not intimate friends of mine, but only acquaintances. However, I suppose the fact of persons belonging to such clubs as I frequent, is a sufficient guarantee for their social position. They were quite good enough, in my opinion, to meet Mrs Lucifer Matcham at all events, and they met her. The dinner had gone off uncommonly well. The shield-shaped salvers had been very much admired, and so had my new tureen. The ladies had retired to the drawing-room, and I had just passed the vine-leaf claret-jug to Colonel Twankay (on which the old hunks did not pass the slightest remark, by the by) when Bowles stooped down and whispered in my ear that a person wished to see me in the Hall, upon very important business.

'Ask him what it is,' said I. 'It is impossible that I can leave my guests.'

'I did ask him, sir, and he refuses to state,' replied Bowles confidentially. 'It is my opinion he's a begging-letter impostor; but he says he must see you in person.'

I was upon the point of saying: 'Tell him to leave the house,' when something or other in

Bowles's manner struck me so decidedly that I resolved not to do so. Why should he say a man, about whom he could know nothing, was a begging-letter impostor? Perhaps I placed rather too much confidence in my butler, as Mrs Maqueechy had hinted that very morning. Actuated by a vague presentiment of distrust and danger, I rose from table, made a hasty apology to my friends, and went with Bowles into the Hall. A shabby-genteel sort of person, answering, indeed, very tolerably to my man's description of him, was standing by the umbrella-stall.

'What is it you want with me, sir?' said I, in a magisterial tone.

'One minute's private conversation with you,' replied he, with a glance at the butler.

'You may leave us, Bowles,' said I; and he withdrew accordingly, although, I am bound to say, very unwillingly. The thought flashed across me like lightning: 'Bowles has something to fear from this man's disclosure;' and the next words of my visitor confirmed me in the suspicion.

'I am a member of the detective police force,' said he, 'and I come to warn you that there is Something wrong in your house.'

'Nothing to do with my plate, I hope?' said I with considerable anxiety.

'Very much to do with it, sir,' returned he grimly. 'There is a thief harboured here; and by this time to-morrow, you will not have a silver spoon in your possession, unless I find him out. I must see every soul you have got under your roof.'

'A thief!' said I; 'impossible! I never have even so much as a strange waiter. That butler has lived with me for ten years, and my two footmen even longer. I will answer for their honesty.'

'Let me see 'em, sir; that's all I want,' was the decisive reply.

'It is not Bowles?' said I appealingly; 'don't say it's Bowles;' but, although it agitated me beyond measure to think that I should have to trust a new butler with all my plate, I confess that I had a horrible idea that it *was* Bowles.

'I think not,' said the detective quietly. 'Let me see the other men.' I turned the gas-light over the door as high as it would go, and called them both into the Hall.

'It is not them,' said he. 'What other men have you got in the house?'

'None but my guests,' said I, 'here in the dining-room.'

'Do you know them all very well, sir? Are none of them mere acquaintances or neighbours?'

'Well,' returned I with hesitation, and feeling very glad that Mrs Matcham was not a third party to this interview, 'I know some, of course, better than others.'

'Just so,' said the detective quietly: 'then I must see them.'

This was a shocking proposal, and made me feel hot all over: but still I was not going to run any risk with those shield-shaped salvers. Major Pinkey, I now remembered, had expressed a great wish to examine them, and perhaps that fact had

had some weight in my inviting him to dinner. Who the deuce Major Pinkey *was*—except that he belonged to my club—I certainly knew no more than the detective, and perhaps a great deal less. Still it seemed a very base thing to open the dining-room door, and let this fellow scrutinise my guests, in hopes to find a scoundrel among them.

'Upon my life,' said I, 'Mr Detective, I can't do it.' 'Very right, sir—very natural,' replied he, smiling in his quiet way. 'It would never do, would it? But look you, sir: I'm a waiter, a hired waiter. Who is to know that I have not business at your sideboard? In one minute, I could run my eye over the whole lot, and spot my man, if he's there, as sure as taxes.'

I did not like even this arrangement; but still it seemed the only thing to be done. So, sending for Bowles, I arranged with him the plan of proceeding, and then returned to the dining-room. My feelings are not to be described, when, a few minutes afterwards, sitting at the head of my table, I heard the door open, and knew that the detective was in the room. He was much longer at the sideboard than he had promised to be, and every hair on my head seemed to stand upright all the time. Suppose he should suddenly fall on Major Pinkey, and cry: 'This is my man!' Nay, suppose Colonel Twankay himself should prove to be the offender! I seemed to have lost all confidence in my fellow-creatures. After a period of anxiety no measure of time could indicate, the supposed waiter took his departure.

'You've got a new man, I see,' said Dr Twistie carelessly: 'with so much plate about, I hope you are satisfied about his honesty.'

I was exceedingly glad to find old Twistie was honest, and had not been taken by the shirt frill, and walked off to Bow Street; but of course I did not tell him *that*.

'Please, sir, you're wanted again,' whispered Bowles as he brought in another bottle of claret.

'If the kitchen chimney is on fire, I am glad we have dined,' observed the major good-humouredly: 'if I can be of any service, pray command me.'

I did not inform him what a relief it was to me that he was not Wanted, but remarking that it was only a little domestic matter, I once more sought the inspector.

'The one I'm after is not among *them*, sir, so far as I know,' observed this official, jerking his thumb in the direction of the dining-room. 'Are you sure there are no more men in your house beside those I have seen?'

'Yes,' said I; 'there are no more.'

'Then now I must have a look at the ladies.'

'The ladies!' cried I, agast at this proposal. 'You don't want to go into the drawing-room?'

'It would be more satisfactory,' observed the detective coolly. 'My information is very reliable. But, at all events, Who is there?'

'Well,' said I, 'my wife is there for one: you have no information against *her*, I suppose?'

He nodded satisfaction so far.

'Then there's the Honourable Mrs Matcham and her daughter.'

'Safe!' rejoined the detective, checking them off on his fingers.

'Mrs Twistie of Regalia Square, and Lady Bobbington.'

'I suppose they're all right,' remarked my inquisitor doubtfully. 'Are you sure there are no more?'

'There's my mother-in-law, but she's in her own room, and exceedingly unwell.'

'Very good,' observed the detective inconsequentially. 'There's a Plant somewhere in this house, however; you may take your oath of that, and very likely in the last place where you would ever look for it; so now I must see the maids.'

It was astonishing even to myself in what complete subjugation this man had placed me. Once, and once only, a terrible misgiving seized me—I was as full of suspicions by this time as a porcupine of quills, and darted them in as many directions—that the detective himself was a 'Plant' that would presently blossom into a burglar; but my overtaxed mind refused to bear this burden. If it was so, I would trust to his clemency—just as an inhabitant of Dubernitz, deserted by Feldzeugmeister von Benedek, might have trusted to a Prussian—to leave me a silver fork or two to carry on the business of life. If this man turned out to be anything less than what he described himself to be, all authority would henceforth lose its effect with me. If Solomon had ever had to do with a metropolitan detective, he would never have spoken so slightly of mankind. I had read of 'the grasp of the law' in works of fiction, but I had never understood the tremendous nature of that figure until I felt this gentleman's knuckles (metaphorically) inserted in my white cravat. He had to repeat: 'So now I must see the maids,' in his undeniable manner, before I could collect myself sufficiently to lead the way to the kitchen—a spot to which I should not alone have ventured to penetrate. To say that the cook and the kitchen-maid stared at the phenomena of our presence, is to underrate their powers of vision.

'Now, I daresay you have no charwoman nor any temporary assistant, my good lady, even on an occasion like the present,' observed my companion urbanely; 'but you and this young woman do all the work yourselves.'

'That's true, sir; we don't mind hard work now and then,' returned the cook, tossing her head; 'and besides, I don't like strangers in my kitchen,' added she with meaning, '*especially when I'm busy, and would rather have their room than their company.*'

I could have given that woman five shillings upon the spot (and I did so the next morning) for that rapid discharge of words: the detective's tongue, although I had found it so terrible a weapon, was silenced by my domestic's needle-gun, and he retired much discomfited, I could see, notwithstanding that he strove to conceal his defeat beneath a contemptuous smile.

'Now, if I'd been an ordinary policeman, and in uniform,' whispered he to me, as we reached the Hall again, 'I could have come over that cook in no time.'

Without remarking upon this confession of defeat, I led the way up to the nursery. The servants in that department were not unused to visitors, and evidently imagined that my companion was some family-man among the guests, who had expressed a wish to 'see the dear children' in their cribs. He, on his part, immediately understood the rôle he was expected to play, and walked admiringly from cot to cot, as though he were a connoisseur in babes.

'Charming children, and well taken care of, I can see,' observed he, with rather a familiar nod (I thought) towards the under-nurse. 'It's neither of

them,' he added in a low whisper. 'You have got a housemaid or two, I suppose?'

His tone was exactly that which an ogre might have used in making inquiries concerning the larder at a Cannibal inn.

The housemaids were inspected, and pronounced to be free from suspicion. 'But I cannot have seen everybody,' said he decisively.

'Yes,' said I, 'everybody, except Mrs Maqueechy.'

'Friend of the family?' inquired the detective, with a disappointed air.

'Well,' said I, 'I might almost say so. She came to us not only with the best of written characters, but my wife had an interview with her late mistress, a Mrs Ogilvie, who pronounced her a perfect treasure; and we ourselves have found her all that could be wished.'

'I should like to see the "perfect treasure,"' quoth the detective, smiling grimly: 'we often find them to be the very people we want.'

'Nay,' said I, 'but in this case your suspicions are quite groundless: Mrs Maqueechy is a superior person, and takes an interest in us which you seldom find in a domestic except after years of service. Besides, she is my mother-in-law's sick-nurse, and most likely they have already made their arrangements for the night. It would be a pity to disturb them.'

'I must see Mrs Maqueechy,' returned my companion gravely; 'she seems altogether too charming to be missed.'

'You detectives are clever fellows,' replied I with irritation; 'but you often spend your time very fruitlessly. It is a pity that a man can't be determined, and yet avoid being obstinate. However, since you have gone so far, you shall go through with the business.'

With that I knocked at the door, and, admitted to the sick-room, informed my mother-in-law briefly of what was taking place; while the invaluable Maqueechy retired with her usual delicacy to the dressing-room. Perhaps, I spoke a little too loud—for that Mrs Maqueechy could stoop to eavesdropping, it is hard to believe—but, at all events, that intelligent woman must have possessed herself of the substance of what I related, for when I opened the door to admit the officer, I found her already outside, and in his custody. She had endeavoured to escape through the second door of the dressing-room—'bolted like a rabbit,' said the detective—but had run into the very danger she would have avoided, and there she was with a couple of handcuffs over her neat mittens.

'We know one another very well, me and Mrs Maqueechy,' observed the detective grimly. 'I was told I should find an old friend in this house, although I had no idea who it would be until you mentioned Mrs Ogilvie. She is very charitable, *she is*, in getting her fellow-creatures situations in respectable families where there happens to be a good deal of plate. It was this very night that this good lady here had engaged to open your front-door to her husband and a friend of his, who keeps a light cart in the mews yonder. Being a sick-nurse, you see, nobody would be surprised at her being about the house at all hours. —Wasn't that your little game, Mrs Maqueechy?'

'Well, I suppose it's a five-year touch!' observed that lady with philosophic coolness.

'Well, I'm afraid it is, ma'am; since that other little business in Carlton Gardens still remains unsettled.—Good-bye, sir; you will see Mrs M.

again, once or twice, before you have done with her; and in the meantime you take my advice, sir, and in hiring another sick-nurse for your mother-in-law, don't you apply to Mrs Ogilvie.'

And off he walked with our 'perfect treasure.'

### SEA-SIDE FLOWERS.

VISITORS to the sea-shore love to wander along the beach in search of the beauteous shells of scallop or cowry, left by the retiring tide, and delight to trace their exquisite design and structure; or, scrambling over the slimy rocks, covered with treacherous algae, will peer into the little pool, fringed with crimson and purple weed, inhabited by various anemones, gray shrimps, and darting fish, in hopes of discovering some new treasure to capture, and carry off in triumph for the aquarium at home; but how few care to examine the modest beauty of the many sea-side flowers blooming unregarded at their very feet; nay, their very existence often unknown, or looked upon as common weeds, devoid of all beauty or interest. Many a lover of wild-flowers and country beauty will pause in the fields and lanes, and even dusty roads that skirt the shore—especially if they be on the southern coasts of England—where the brier and hawthorn hedges are tangled with luscious honeysuckle, and the primroses cluster in masses; where the wild hyacinth peeps from amidst the nettles, and the speedwell opens its 'angel's eyes' of loveliest azure; but as they approach the sea-beach, the proverb of its sterility,

Barren as the sand on the sea-shore,

is felt, and nought is expected or looked for but the rich harvest of ocean's wondrous things cast on the shingle, or left in the pools beyond. The immediate banks and links of the sea-side are usually treeless, and, to non-observant eyes, dreary wastes; but not a spot on this wide world is without its interest and beauty, and delightful it is, when rambling along the sandy beach, listening to the music of the waves on the pebbly shore, to find how many lovely blossoms are scattered even here, ornamenting the rugged sides of the chalky cliff or rock, weaving a flowery tapestry over the sloping links, and binding together with interlaced roots the loose substance of many a sand-bank.

Unlike the country meadows, where the loveliest blossoms appear with the earliest sunshine of the year, the fairest sea-side flowers are to be gathered during the summer and autumn months, though even in spring, the turf which enamels the links, down often to the water's edge, will be found decked with an occasional early blossom—

As if the rainbows of the first fresh spring  
Had blossomed where they fell.

While, at all seasons of the year, here, as elsewhere,  
Daisies with their pinky lashes  
raise their glad faces to the sun:

On waste and woodland, rock and plain,  
Its humble buds unheeded rise;  
The rose has but a summer reign—  
The daisy never dies.



The first gleam of spring sunshine is however reflected not only by the silver daisy, but by that 'sunflower of the spring,' the Golden Dandelion, which glitters as early as April on the sandy, grassy slope, familiar to all, and common everywhere. The leaves of the dandelion grow from the root; they are deeply cut and notched, and from this have gained their name, which we English have corrupted from the French *dent-de-lion*. The Scotch call the dandelion the hawkweed gowan. The leaves are much eaten on the continent for salad, and a medicine is extracted from the root. Every one is familiar with the downy ball that succeeds the flower:

The dandelion with globe of down,  
The school-boy's clock in every town,  
Which the truant puffs again,  
To conjure lost hours back again.

When Linnæus proposed the use of what he termed a floral clock, which was to consist of plants which opened and closed their blossoms at particular hours of the day, the dandelion was one of the flowers selected, because its petals open at six; the hawkweed was another—it opens at seven; the succory at eight, the celandine and marigold at nine, and so on, the closing of the blossoms marking the corresponding hours in the afternoon. Nor is this the effect of light on the plants, because, when placed in a dark room, the flowers are found to open and close their petals at the same times.

In the month of May, many sea-side blossoms appear; but in June they burst forth in such wild profusion, that we are at a loss to know which to gather first:

For who would sing the flowers of June,  
Though from gray morn to blazing noon,  
From blazing noon to dewy eve,  
The chaplet of his song he weave,  
Would find his summer daylight fail,  
And leave half told the pleasing tale.

We must only attempt to pluck such as are most common, and most likely to attract attention.

Many a sea-side cliff is adorned with the handsome pale-yellow clusters of the Sea-cabbage, which flowers from May until the late autumnal months, and is very ornamental, hanging in tufts from the crevices of the chalky heights. It grows from one to two feet high, has woody stems, and leaves a deep green, tinged with purple and yellow. It is very common on the Dover Cliffs, where it is gathered, and sold to be boiled and eaten. From it spring our numerous varieties of cabbage; and this reminds me how very greatly we are indebted to our sea-side plants for many of our most valuable vegetables: the fresh crisp celery, the dainty asparagus, the beet, and sea-kale, in addition to the cabbage, are all derived from our salt-marshes, and, under careful cultivation, have become what they are.

The Rest-harrow, which we gather in the corn-field, may also be found adorning many a green patch on the chalky cliff-side or sandy bank near the sea. Its woody thorns are more abundant and stronger than when flourishing in richer soil. Its leaves are numerous and small, its butterfly-shaped blossoms usually a purple-rose colour, but some-

times almost white. Near the sea-side, I have often found the little Sea Pearlwort, which requires close observation to detect it. It grows upright, has tiny, delicate leaves, and flower-cups tinged with a reddish-purple colour.

Very common in the sand is the Sea-rocket, a smooth, glaucous plant, with pretty lilac-pink flowers, which often mixes its blossoms with the white petals of the Scurvy-grass.

But June flowers press upon us: here we have plentiful at Dover and many other sea-side places the Viper's Bugloss, certainly one of the handsomest wild-flowers, either of the neglected field or beach, that we have. It is a magnificent plant, sometimes attaining the height of three feet, its rich purple blossoms, with their long bright red stamens, often extending half-way down the stems. It is peculiar for the variety of tints it exhibits in its flowers, the buds being a rosy red, but the expanded blossom a rich purple, which gradually assumes a deep blue. Sometimes it is found white. The stems and leaves are covered with bristles and brownish warts, or tubercles. Its name is taken from the resemblance the seeds bear to a viper's head, and its spotted stem to the snake's skin; and in olden times, the plant was supposed to heal the bite of a viper. It flourishes best on a chalky hill, or sandy waste ground:

Here the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil,  
and rears its rich spike of closely-set flowers with a stately air. Though its foliage is coarse, its blossom is very beautiful; not easy, however, to gather, for bees are ever hovering around it—

Flying solicitous from flower to flower,  
Tasting each sweet that dwells  
Within its scented bells;

and oft tearing their delicate wings amongst the thick, hairy prickles. The common Kidney-vetch flourishes luxuriantly by the sea-shore, decking the heights with its handsome yellow flowers from May to September. It crowds its blossoms into flower-cups, thickly covered with down; and two such tufts or heads usually grow at the top of each stem. It is as common a flower on the continent as with us, though it varies in colour—owing, Linnæus tells us, to the nature of the soil. The French call it *barbe de Jupiter*, Jupiter's beard. We also give it the names of lady's-fingers and lambtoe. Clare tells us—

The yellow lambtoe I have often got,  
Sweet creeping o'er the banks in sunny time.

During June, the common Pellitory of the wall spreads over many a rocky spot, sometimes trailing its stems over the surface, and at others rising erect, a foot high. Its leaves grow up the hairy stalk, and are mixed with the small purple-red flowers that lie closely against the stem. The White Ox-eye, though loving best to bow in beauty midst the waving grass of the meadow, may yet be found straying near the coast; and very beautiful are its large solitary flower-heads, with their rich golden centre and pure white ray.

Several thistles are to be found flourishing by the sea-coast, blooming from June to September. Perhaps the most familiar is the common Sow-thistle, growing on almost every waste place, and greatly relished by rabbits, on account of the milky juices it contains. Its leaves are deeply notched, the lobes turned backwards, its flowers yellow.

The Milk-thistle is easily recognised by its large leaves veined with white, and deep purple flowers. It is a prickly plant, often growing as high as four or five feet. Though common in England, it is rare in Scotland, and, I have read, is only to be found on the rocky cliffs near Dumbarton Castle, where tradition tells it was planted by Mary Queen of Scots. The Star-thistle may occasionally be found among the wild blossoms of the sea-side, growing on cliff-tops, or green patches of the beach. It has hard woody spines, standing out from the flower-cup only, and in this differs from the other thistles, which are usually covered with sharp bristles, and seem defiantly to announce:

I am Sir Thistle, the surly,  
The rough, and the rude, and the burly;  
I doubt if you'll find  
My touch quite to your mind,  
Whether late be your visit or early.

July comes laden with a host of fair blossoms of her own, as numerous as those of June:

Bright gems of earth, in which perchance we see  
What Eden was, what Paradise may be.

Perhaps one of the most attractive, as well as one of the first in beauty, and blooming down almost to the water's edge, is the Yellow-horned Poppy, scattering its crumpled golden blossoms with every passing breeze on the surrounding sea-weed. Its stems and leaves are a delicate blue-green, wearing the bloom that is called glaucous, from which its botanical name is taken. It is hairy, and its peculiar, curved, horn-like pods are often half a foot long. It is a showy, handsome plant, but smells badly, and is said to be poisonous. Quite as pretty, and far less harmful, is the Sea-convolvulus, trailing its rose-coloured bells with yellow rays, and dark-green succulent leaves, in clusters on the sandy links, where it presents a succession of delicate, short-lived flowers; and equally common, but less showy, are the green blossoms and thick waxy leaves of the Sea-beet (*Beta maritima*), which, when cultivated, we often recognise as a useful vegetable. I have often gathered near the sea the Hound's-tongue, easily recognised by its dark purple-red blossoms, and strong smell of mice. Its soft downy leaves are supposed to resemble in form the tongue of a dog, and from this it derives its Greek and common name. It is a tall plant, often growing two feet high. Its foliage is a dull green, its flowers a rich claret colour.

On the sandy downs and in the rock-crevices down even to the shore,

Flourishing so gay and wildly free,  
Upon the salt-marsh by the roaring sea,

are the pink and white heads of the sea-pink, or well-known Thrift, so often used as a bordering in our flower-gardens, but here hanging in little tufts from the rocks, thriving where little nourishment can be afforded, and thus well meriting its name. Its leaves grow from the root, and mostly resemble coarse grass. Its flowers form round heads of lilac-pink blossoms, and crown downy stalks, some four inches high. There, too, is

The sea-lavender, which lacks perfume, and is a species of everlasting, retaining its colour and form long after being gathered. Its spike of blue-lilac flowers is very handsome. There are several species of sea-lavender; and in August we have the delicate lilac-blue blossoms and bluish-

green foliage of the upright-spiked Sea-lavender, so often gathered to deck the winter vase. It is smaller both in leaf and flower than the former species.

Growing down, even amid the sand, we may now gather the compact head of the tall eryngo, or Sea-holly, which has blue blossoms, in shape resembling the thistle's; and firm prickly leaves, beautifully veined, and adorned with that pale sea-green bloom so common in our sea-side plants. It grows about a foot high, and is stiff and rigid.

One of the purest-tinted blue flowers that we have may be found flourishing by the sea. It is the narrow-leaved Pale Flax, a sweet, delicate, fragile blossom, that drops its petals as we gather it. It is a tall plant, with a solitary flower on each stem, and small alternate leaves, adorning each to the root. Its stem is tough and fibrous, like all its species. The flax cultivated for commerce is a pretty pale-blue bell, erect and fragile, dancing and trembling with the faintest whisper of the passing breeze. Mrs Howitt well describes it:

Oh! the goodly flax-flower!  
It groweth on the hill;  
And be the breeze awake or 'sleap,  
It never standeth still!  
It seemeth all astriv with life,  
As if it loved to thrive,  
As if it had a merry heart  
Within its stem alive.

How pretty are the little sandworts now in blossom, especially the sea-pimpernel, or Sea-side Sandwort which blooms in shining, glossy patches only a few inches high. Its clustering white flowers are almost hidden by the thick, crowding, succulent leaves. There are ten species of sandwort. Perhaps the commonest of all is the sea-spurry sandwort, which hangs its little star-like blossoms in trailing tufts from the cliff-sides.

In this month also we may gather the white-rayed flowers of the Sea-side Feverfew, which often grows far down on the beach. Its blossoms are the size of a daisy, its stems thick, its leaves stalky, its growth low. And now also, decking the sides of the banks, is the perfoliate Yellowwort with its bright yellow flowers, and pale sea-green leaves, which grow in couplets, joining at the base, the stalk passing through them. The plant grows about a foot high, is not uncommon, and to be found in flourishing abundance on the Kentish coast.

Fringing the summit of the tall sea-cliffs, and clothing with its clusters of yellowish-white flowers and fleshy sea-green leaves the many crevices on the steep sides of the rocks, we may see the Samphire, so plentiful on the southern shores, and especially at Dover, where it is gathered during May for pickle. That there is danger to the gatherer we may infer, from Shakspeare's mention in *King Lear*, where the scene is laid near Dover:

Half-way down,  
Hangs one that gathers samphire: dreadful trade!

Several kinds of Sea-southernwood are now shewing their green flowers; the Saltwort, and funny-looking, jointed-branched, leafless Glasswort are to be gathered now; both so useful for the soda they contain.

There is a species of Nightshade often to be found flourishing on our sea-beaches, with blossoms shaped like the potato-flower, but white, and followed by black berries, highly poisonous.

There are also the Dwarf-centaury and the Dwarf-tufted Centaury, neither growing beyond a few inches in height, both possessing light-green stems, and clusters of rose-coloured blossoms.

The Buck's-horn Plantain is common on the sea-shore. It derives its name from the peculiar cutting of its leaves.

Very common on the rocky bank is the Wild Mignonette. Though lacking the sweet fragrance of the garden species, its pale greenish-yellow spikes are very ornamental. The Sea-side Pea grows on the links and banks of our beaches, but is uncommon. Its butterfly-shaped blossoms remind one of the sweet-pea of the garden :

Where swelling peas on leafy stalks are seen,  
Mixed flowers of red and azure shine between.

During the great famine of 1555, it is said that thousands of families subsisted on the seeds contained in the pods of the sea-side pea.

Near the beach, I have often gathered the Knot-grass, so named from the knottiness of its stem, and to be found flourishing everywhere :

By the lone quiet grave,  
In the wild hedgerow, the knot-grass is seen,  
Down in the rural lane,  
Or on the verdant plain,

Everywhere humble, and everywhere green.

Shakspeare has called it 'the hindering knot-grass,' on account of the obstacles its trailing, tangled stems offer to the husbandman. Milton speaks of it as

The knot-grass, dew besprent.

It is familiar to almost every eye, forming little green patches even between the stones of our streets, its tiny, pale-pink blossoms growing so closely to the stem as to be half-hidden amongst the leaves. Its seeds and young buds afford a store of food for birds; and it is said that swine and sheep love to feed upon it. Milton tells us,

The chewing flocks  
Had ta'en their supper of that savory herb,  
The knot-grass.

It bears little resemblance to a grass; but this reminds me that amongst our sea-side plants the grasses are perhaps the most interesting, as well as useful and important, and are often of great service by their spreading mass of tough underground stems offering a strong resistance to the inroads of the sea. Several of the shores of England are so protected; and the greater part of the coast of Holland being composed of dykes, owes its security to the powerful obstacles the peculiar growth of these grasses affords. Thus we see

The commonest things may oftimes be  
Those of the greatest utility.  
How many uses hath grass which groweth,  
Wheresoever the wild wind bloweth.

Useful as the sea-side grasses are, however, we have not space in this short paper to take more than a passing glance at them, remarking that the two most deserving of notice for their value in sea-resistance are the Sea-wheat Grass and the Sea-reed.

I have often seen flourishing near the sea-coast the rich clusters of the Ragwort (*Senecio Jacobaea*), bright as the golden sunbeam, waving its tall blossoms in the breeze, and emitting a strong smell of honey. It opens its flowers first in July, but often,

Coming like an after-thought,  
When other flowers are vainly sought,

lingers on until Christmas; and when cold winds and wintry snows have withered every other flower, this remains,

A token to the wintry earth, that beauty liveth still.

Very pretty is the yellow carpet spread on the dry bank by the Yellow Bed-straw, with its mass of tiny blossoms and slender thready leaves of brilliant green. Its flowers, like those of the ragwort just mentioned, also smell sweetly of honey. In the Hebrides, a reddish-brown dye is extracted from its roots.

In September, we see the tall, handsome Golden-rod, not only in our woods and hedgeways, but also on the sea-side cliff, somewhat stunted in growth, but still beautiful with its crowded clusters of golden blossoms, over which butterflies, moths, and bees hover incessantly, in spite of its

Florets wrapped in silky down,  
To guard it from the bee.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, it was sold in the London markets by herb-dealers. It was supposed to cure wounds.

Then also the Michaelmas daisy, or Sea-starwort, opens its pale lilac petals, and continues to blossom until other flowers have nearly all faded away :

And the sole blossom which can glad the eye  
Is yon pale starwort nodding to the wind.

It often grows as high as three feet; its leaves are smooth, a sickly green in colour, and very succulent. At this time, we shall also find the Marsh Mallow. It is a medicinal plant, containing a quantity of starchy mucilage, which is formed into a paste, and taken as a cure for coughs. Its flowers are a pretty rose-tint; its leaves soft, downy, and very thick. It grows about two feet high, and is altogether an attractive, handsome plant, the more valued,

Because a fair flower that illumines the scene,  
When the tempest of winter is near;  
'Mid the frowns of adversity, cheerful of mien,  
And gay, when all's dark and serene.

Such are a few of the sea-side blossoms to be gathered on our coasts. Let my readers, next summer, take a ramble along the beach, and hunt for themselves, when they may discover a host of fresh beauties rising on all sides, creeping over the loose sand, topping the rocky heights, or decking the grassy slopes—

As though some gentle angel,  
Commissioned love to bear,  
Had wandered o'er the green-sward,  
And left her footprints there.

Let not the humblest, most neglected flower be discarded, for each bears its own little mine of beauty, fraught with instruction, and the promptings of pure and holy thoughts, that lead the mind from 'nature to nature's God.'

Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege  
Through all the years of this our life to lead  
From joy to joy; for she can so inform  
The mind that is within us, so impress  
With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
Our cheerful faith, that all that we behold  
Is full of blessings.

## BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.—WHITE GRANGE.

THE lone farmhouse known as White Grange was buried from the world among the bleak, desolate hills and solitary sheep-walks which stretch from the sea on one side, across the north-eastern corner of Monkshire, almost to the edge of the lovely valley in which Normanford lies warm and sheltered; beyond which, the country becomes more fruitful and open, if less picturesque. White Grange was a gray, old, storm-beaten building, and bore the date of 1695 carved above its rude porch. Near it stood a barn, and a few other out-buildings, the whole surrounded by a ruinous, moss-grown wall; beyond which you came at once upon the bleak, high moorland, open to every wind that blew. In one of these out-houses was the well from which in former times the family supply of water had been drawn. Connected with this well, there was a dark story of a murdered traveller whose body had been thrown into it; which, whether true or false, gave the place an uneasy reputation through the country-side.

White Grange seems to have been unfortunate in its tenants for a long series of years. Such a story as that of the murdered traveller would hardly attach itself to any reputable household; and old Job Sandysen, as we have seen, was by no means the most respectable of men. The farm was now held by a brother-in-law of Job, a man named Nathan Orchard, to whom the family reputation clung tenaciously, and not, perhaps, without reason. He was a hard-drinking, hard-swearing, money-grasping old reprobate, this Nathan Orchard; disliked and feared at every market and country fair which he attended; and although no overt act of dishonesty could fairly be laid to his charge, there were whispered rumours in plenty, among those of his own station in life, of acts that any honest Monkshire farmer would have blushed to own: of sorry, spavined hacks doctored up and sold at distant fairs as sound young horses; of mildewed wheat, with a covering of wholesome grain, sold under a fictitious name and address; of a forged Bank of England note for fifty pounds traced home to him, which he swore to having received from some unknown man in part-payment of an account; together with other trifles needless to specify here. Nathan's household consisted of himself and four children—two sons and two daughters, all grown up; together with an old crone, who acted the part of domestic drudge. A rough, ignorant, hard-living crew they were, the sons following closely in the footsteps of their father, and the two girls being duplicates in softer clay of their brothers.

In a room on the upper floor of White Grange, two women were seated one wintry afternoon. It was a room with a wide, old-fashioned fireplace, and a stout oaken door, and a thick beam across the ceiling—a beam with a strong hook in it, from which depended a fragment of rope, darkly suggestive of a foregone suicide—a room with two diamond-paned windows, across each of which, on the inside, ran two stout iron bars, and in this respect different from any other windows in the

house. Why the windows of this room should be barred, rather than those of any other room, was one of the mysteries of White Grange, which Nathan Orchard himself would have been quite unable to explain.

The younger of the two females, a stout, ruddy-cheeked lass, was seated at one of those old-fashioned spinning-wheels which are becoming rarer every day, and crooning some country ditty to herself as she worked. She was Nathan Orchard's youngest daughter. The elder of the two females is known to the reader already, she being, indeed, none other than Madame Marie, Jane Garrod's sometime lodger at Kingsthorpe Station, and the woman of whose murder Mr Duplessis had been wrongfully suspected. But she was much changed since we saw her last. In the first place, there seemed nothing left of her but skin and bone, so thin and fleshless had she become. Her long black hair had all been cut off during the fit of raving madness which supervened upon her abduction and forcible confinement at White Grange; and although it had grown somewhat since that time, it was still as short as that of a man. Her dress, too, was rather out of the common way, consisting outwardly, as it did, of a red flannel dressing-robe, which, although it reached to the ground when she walked, did not hide, as she sat there, her bare feet, thrust loosely into a pair of old slippers. It was her whim to be dressed thus, and neither persuasion nor threats could induce her to alter the style of her costume. Just now, she was painfully and laboriously busy with her needle, stitching a doll's clothes: that was her occupation day after day, the dressing of dolls, and instructions were given that her whim in this respect should be gratified. A quiet, harmless form of madness that expends itself on such trifles, is infinitely preferable to the vagaries of a raging lunatic. So she dressed and undressed her dolls, of which she had about a dozen in all; and talked to them, and scolded them, and caressed them, as any child of six might have done. She had a sweet voice; and sometimes, in the twilight, she would sing little French love-songs to her dolls, trifles which had in them a pathos all their own, such even as touched sometimes—although she did not understand the words—the unsuspicious heart of Peg Orchard, her youthful jailer. Sometimes she would fall into a fit of sullen brooding, which would last for a couple of days, during which time she neither ate nor spoke, but would pass hour after hour crouched on the old-fashioned window-seat, staring out through the barred panes with such a hopeless, far-away look in her eyes as might have moved any one to pity. What she thought about at such times, no one ever knew. Perhaps, in her disordered mind, pictures of happy days long past, mirrored themselves brokenly, as in a troubled pool; perhaps she was brooding darkly over her wrongs, and striving to piece together some wild scheme of revenge. These sullen moods always ended in an outburst of hysterical sobs and tears, which did not cease till her little strength was utterly exhausted, when she would lapse into a deep, deathlike sleep as she lay on the floor, a sleep which would last for twelve or fourteen hours; after which she would awake as light and happy as a child, and call for food and brandy, and begin to dress her dolls again, and to sing her little love-songs, as though she had not a care in the world.



Peg and Madame had not been together all this time without learning to like one another, each in her own peculiar way. Peg, while being the most faithful and incorruptible of jailers, still contrived to secure for her charge many little indulgences, chiefly in the way of food; for Madame had always been nice in her eating, and the fare at White Grange was ordinarily of the coarsest kind. Madame was not ungrateful; and in her calmer and saner moments, would do her best to reciprocate the girl's kindness. Thus she taught Peg to improve her appearance by compressing her waist, and keeping her shoulder-blades in their proper place, thereby necessitating an upright carriage of the person; and as Madame prided herself on her taste, and was dexterous with her needle, she so altered and improved Peg's Sunday frock—lengthening the body, and puffing the sleeves, and imparting to it such a graceful fall behind—that that young person felt she had never cut such a fashionable figure before. Then she taught Peg how to dress her hair in a more elegant style, and gave her the recipe for a wash that was warranted to beautify the complexion, however tanned or freckled it might be. Peg's heart was finally won when Madame presented her with the rings out of her own ears; only Peg was afraid to wear them, lest her greedy old father should force her to give them up, that he might pawn or sell them.

Sometimes, in mild, open weather, there would come over Madame a desire to exchange her close shut-up room for the fresh air outside. At such times, she would induce Peg to ask permission from the old man for them to walk in the orchard for half an hour. Sometimes the permission was given, sometimes it was not. When the answer was favourable, Madame would wrap a thick shawl round her, and taking Peg's arm, would pace till she was tired the gravelled walk which ran from end to end of the neglected strip of ground which, by some strange perversion of terms, was known as 'the orchard.' Mad though Madame might be on some points, she was never mad enough to attempt to escape while taking her outdoor exercise. In a personal encounter, she would have stood no chance against the stalwart Peg; and the fleet-footed farmer's daughter would have run her down before she had got twenty yards away.

It was while taking one of these quiet walks in charge of Peg that Madame's sharp eyes caught sight of something unusual lying half-concealed among the thick grass. She repassed it again and again before she could make out clearly that it was nothing more than a rusty old knife, and then she could have screamed aloud with all a maniac's fearful joy at sight of such a priceless treasure. But how to secure it without being seen? Disengaging her arm suddenly from Peg's, she seated herself on the grass close to the knife, so that a fold of her shawl hid it from view. After that, it was easy to push it unobserved up her sleeve. When she got back to her own room, and the key was turned on her for the night, she brought forth her treasure, and kissed it, and stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth to smother the wild bursts of laughter that would not be kept back when she thought how cleverly she had deceived them all, and what pretty things it was possible to accomplish even with such an ugly weapon as a rusty knife. There was a little bit broken away from the under-part of one of the window-seats, leaving a small cavity between the wood-work and the bricks; and

there, after much painful cogitation, she hid her treasure.

Madame was in one of her better moods this wintry afternoon, but hardly as talkative as usual; and as the shadows outside grew deeper, Peg, too, became mute, and the silence was broken only by the whir of the spinning-wheel, or the weird muttering of the wind in the wide old chimney. At length Marie flung down her sewing with a petulant air. 'There! I can see no longer,' she exclaimed. 'So Elise, poor darling, will have to go without her petticoat to-night, for I can't bear stitching by candle-light. Do, my dear child, go down stairs, and bring me up a cup of tea and a candle.' She listened intently without stirring till Peg's footsteps had died away down stairs; then she rose, and crossing the floor with quick, noiseless steps, drew the knife from its hiding-place. 'A few more nights, and I shall be free,' she muttered to herself. 'The bar is nearly through, and soon the cage will be empty and the bird flown. Another windy night,' she added, peering with white face and straining eyes into the gathering gloom outside. 'The wind is Marie's friend. I like the sound of his rough voice; I like to hear him rattling the doors and windows, and shaking the crazy old house in his burly arms. He comes across the waste at midnight to summon me to my task. Then, when everybody in the house is fast asleep, and they think I am asleep too, I slip quietly out of bed, and begin my work; and oh! what weary work it is, sawing away, all in the dark, at the rotten old bar with my trusty friend here. But when the first streak of gray shews across the moorland, then I put my knife away, and creep back to bed with such aching bones, and such feet of ice; and when Peg comes in with my cup of tea, looking so fresh and innocent, I hide my head under the clothes, and laugh to myself to think what a simpleton she is, and how I am deceiving them all. And he is here! I know it. Sometimes I hear his voice. Black-hearted monster! I will be revenged—revenged—revenged on you before I go! But when I try to think how this must be, my head begins to ache, and moans, like drops of blood, dance before my eyes. But it will all come to me suddenly, like a flash of lightning, at the right moment. Yes, a few more nights, and the cage will be broken, and the bird flown. Oh, what fun it all is!'

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.—THE READING OF THE WILL.

A wintry night, starless and lowering, with a bleak wind moaning drearily through the woods of Belair like a voice of sorrowful warning. Eight o'clock is striking by the turret-clock as the great doors of the Hall are flung wide open to let out for the last time him who had so long been master of that stately home. His pleasant voice and genial laugh, never more to be heard within its rooms; never more his tall, slender form and white head to be seen by tenant or farm-labourer in field or coppice, or at friendly rent-day feast. All that is left on earth of Sir Philip Spencelaugh is about to cross the threshold of his home for the last time; and to-morrow a new master will reign at Belair.

One by one, from a side-door, dark-cloaked figures to the number of thirty or forty come quietly out, each of them carrying a lighted torch; and range themselves in front of the main entrance. Presently the coffin makes its

appearance, borne on the shoulders of men who have worked on the estate all their lives—men who have loved and respected him they are carrying, as their greatest earthly benefactor. Slowly and tenderly, down the wide, shallow steps, they bear their solemn burden, over which a great pall is thrown. Close behind, in solitary state, comes the son and heir, a tall, slender young man, with a worn, effeminate face; genuinely sorry for the loss of the kind-hearted old man he is following; half angry with himself because his eyes *will* remain so obstinately dry; with yet a lurking feeling of satisfaction in one corner of his heart, which will not be quite trampled out, that he is now really and veritably Sir Gaston Spencelaugh—that he may now clear off those confounded post-obits, and be his own master, with plenty of ready money for the future.

So down the main avenue of the Park the long procession slowly moved, lighted up by the lurid blaze of the torches, which shewed from a distance like gigantic fire-flies among the trees. Behind Sir Gaston, at a respectful distance, came a numerous array of the personal friends of the dead man: magnates of the county; friends of the cover-side and the stubble-field; men who not seldom had sat at his table; men at whose houses he had visited, and to whose wives and daughters he had been well known. Behind these, again, came a long string of humbler friends—small farmers and labourers on the estate, whose grief for the loss of the man they were following was probably quite as genuine as that of more aristocratic friends.

Little groups of country-people, women and children mostly, whose husbands and brothers took part in the procession, were scattered about the Park close to the line of march; and many a tear was shed, and many a blessing invoked to the memory of the benefactor they would never see again. With such accompaniments was Sir Philip Spencelaugh borne to his grave.

Never had the little church of Belair been more densely crowded than it was on the night of the baronet's funeral. The first to enter it, and the last to leave it, were two women, who sat in an obscure corner of the gallery, and the hoods of whose black cloaks completely hid their faces from observation. When the solemn service was at an end—when the body had been lowered into its resting-place in the vault underneath the chancel—when the vicar's last Amen had been said, and the last notes of the choir had died away into silence, these two hooded women were the last of all there to lean over the dark cavity in the floor, and bid farewell in tearful silence to him who slept so soundly below. Then homeward through the already deserted Park by near ways well known to themselves.

These were Frederica Spencelaugh and Jane Garrod.

Frederica had passed only one night at Belair after her return from town. Now that its master was dead, she felt that not without derogation to herself could she stay there any longer. As the antagonist of Lady Spencelaugh in the course which she, Frederica, was fully determined to pursue, she felt that for the future her home must be elsewhere; so she went to her friend, Mrs Barber of Ashleigh Park, and there took asylum for a week or two. She had telegraphed for Mr Penning on the day following her uncle's death; and that gentleman, acting on her instructions,

had intimated to Mr Greenhough, the family lawyer, that he would be prepared, on the reading of the will, to offer certain evidence which would go far to prove that Gaston Spencelaugh was not the rightful heir to the entail and title of his father.

The reading of the will was fixed to take place in the great drawing-room of Belair at ten o'clock on the morning after the funeral. Mr Greenhough, instructed by Lady Spencelaugh and Mrs Winch as to the nature of the evidence which was likely to be put in by Mr Penning in opposition to the natural and lawful claim of Sir Gaston, pooh-poohed the whole affair cheerfully; and hinted delicately how sorry he was to find that a lady for whom he entertained so profound a respect as he did for Miss Spencelaugh, should have lent herself so credulously to the schemes of an impostor. Under the influence of this mild tonic, and the exordiums of her stanch friend Mrs Winch, her Ladyship's drooping courage revived in some measure; and it was with tolerable composure both of mind and body that she took her seat, on the eventful morning, in the great chair of carved oak, which had been brought from the library on purpose, and so sat, with Gaston on her right hand, to hear the reading of her husband's will. Her mourning became her admirably. The style of her corsage, and the cut of her sleeves, had been a source of some anxiety to her; but little Miss Penny, assisted by a hint now and then from Clotilde, had overcome all difficulties admirably; and nothing could have been more becoming, and at the same time more pensively stylish, than her Ladyship's toilet on this her first appearance in public in her new rôle of widow.

At the opposite end of the long table sat Frederica, looking very pale, but very lovely. The executors named under the will were Sir Michael Casey, a middle-aged Irish baronet, who resided a few miles from Belair; and Dr Allen, the vicar of Normanford, and one of Sir Philip's oldest friends. Both these gentlemen followed Lady Spencelaugh into the room, and sat down opposite Mr Greenhough the lawyer. There, too, were assembled Mrs Jones the housekeeper, and Mr Bellamy the steward, and a few of the older domestics, whose grief for the loss of their master was probably tempered by some natural anticipations of a legacy. Discreetly in the background sat Dr Roach, the great medical luminary of the district, blandly unconscious, to all outward appearance, that his name was mentioned in the will of his late esteemed patient, although his friend Mr Greenhough had whispered that pleasing fact in his ear as they drove home from the funeral together on the preceding night.

A very brief abstract of the contents of Sir Philip Spencelaugh's will, as read slowly and distinctly by Mr Greenhough, is all that need be given here. The Belair and Hillgrove estates were both entailed, and beyond these, the amount of property left for division was not very considerable. The savings of the baronet's later years, consisting chiefly of securities in various public undertakings, amounting in the aggregate to about fifteen thousand pounds, together with a small banker's balance, were all left to Gaston, burdened only with a few legacies to certain old servants, and the cost of a few mementoes to the executors and other friends. To Lady Spencelaugh was left, for her own absolute disposal, the small Norfolk estate of Dene Towers, of the value

of five hundred pounds per annum; with the further addition of a life-charge on the general estates of four hundred a year more. Frederica's name was mentioned last of all. We give the extract relating to her in its entirety:

'To my well-beloved kinswoman, Frederica Mary Spencelaugh' (so ran the will), 'I give and bequeath the necklace and coronet of diamonds formerly the property of my mother; together with the miniatures, painted on ivory, of her father, my dear cousin and companion-in-arms, and myself, which will be found in the top left-hand drawer of my private bureau. These (knowing her to be in no need of worldly goods), together with an old man's love and blessing, are all that I have to bequeath to the aforesaid Frederica Mary Spencelaugh; but they will be enough for her to remember me by.'

Mr Greenhough took off his spectacles, and proceeded slowly to fold up the will. Mrs Jones took the hint, and rising, dropped a stately courtesy to my Lady, and sailed out of the room, followed by the other domestics. An uneasy brooding sense, as of a moral thunder-cloud about to burst close over their heads, rested upon the majority of those now left in the room—for it had been whispered about that something strange would follow upon the reading of the will. Mr Greenhough proceeded in the midst of profound silence to rub his spectacles deliberately with his pocket-handkerchief, then to adjust them carefully on his nose, and then to select a letter from a bundle of other documents all labelled and tied together with red tape.

'Your Ladyship and gentlemen,' began Mr Greenhough, 'I have here a communication of a very singular character, received by me five days ago, and signed by a gentleman of the name of Penning, who is, I believe, like myself, a lawyer, and who, in this matter, is acting under instructions from Miss Spencelaugh. Before laying this document before you, Miss Spencelaugh will perhaps allow me to ask her one question?'

A slight motion of Frederica's head gave Mr Greenhough the required permission.

'Is it your deliberate intention, Miss Spencelaugh, may I ask, to persevere in this matter? There is yet time to draw back. Those blazing embers would destroy this letter in a few seconds. No eye but my own has seen it, and I would forget that it had ever been written.'

'It is my deliberate intention to proceed with this matter,' said Frederica in a low, clear voice.

'Then I have no alternative but to read the letter,' said Mr Greenhough.

'Before you begin, I should like Mr Penning to be present,' said Frederica.

Then when Mr Penning, who had been waiting in an ante-room, was seated, and had been duly scrutinised by the assembled company, Mr Greenhough proceeded to read the letter, which, as before stated, was simply an intimation that Miss Spencelaugh was prepared with certain evidence to dispute the right of Gaston to the title and estates of his father.

The Irish baronet took snuff nervously; family disagreements were his especial abhorrence. The vicar looked very grave; he could scarcely believe the evidence of his own ears. It sounded to him like the assertion of a lunatic to state that Gaston Spencelaugh, who had grown up among them all from childhood, was not his father's heir. And that such an assertion should emanate from Frederica, of all people in the world! But that he had

known her intimately for years, and had long recognised her as by far the cleverest and most able of the female coadjutors whom he had enlisted under his banner, he felt that he should really have had cause this morning to doubt her sanity. In such a case it was evidently his duty to remonstrate with her, and the vicar was a man who never shrunk from a duty however unpleasant it might be. So he crossed the room, and leaned over her and spoke to her in a low voice. Frederica listened quietly to all he had to urge, but only shook her head when he had done, and laying her hand gently in his, said: 'You are prejudging me. Wait till you shall have heard everything. Heaven knows, this task is not of my seeking. It has come to me unsought; and I should be doing foul wrong to the memory of the dead, and the rights of the living, were I to abandon it now.' After this, the worthy vicar could only go back to his seat, wondering more and more.

Lady Spencelaugh was sitting near the fire, with her face so far turned away from the company that nothing of it was visible but the profile. Gaston, chafing inwardly, was seated near her. What was all this bother about, he should like to know? Dispute his title, indeed! Was he not Sir Gaston Spencelaugh, owner of Belair, and of all that fair landscape which could be seen through the windows stretching far into the dim distance? He had half a mind to ring the bell, and order Green to shew these old fogies the door. It was high time they remembered who was master now. He was touched a little to think that Freddy, whom he had always liked and loved in his own careless fashion, should be turning against him at such a time with some trumped-up story of another heir; but he felt so secure in his new position that he could afford to let her have her fling, and then be magnanimous, and forgive her.

'The evidence of which you speak in this letter,' said Mr Greenhough to Mr Penning, 'will be, I presume, forthcoming without difficulty?'

'We are prepared to go into the question at once,' said Mr Penning.

'Before entering into particulars,' returned Mr Greenhough, 'you will perhaps furnish us with the name of the individual in whose favour these extraordinary proceedings are taken.'

'Willingly. The gentleman to whom you allude is known at present as Mr John English.'

'I should like to ask this Mr John English a few questions. Oblige me by producing him.'

'We are unable to do so just now,' answered Mr Penning, not without hesitation.

'Do you, in fact, know where this Mr John English is living at the present time?' asked Mr Greenhough.

'We certainly do not,' answered the London man of law.

'Precisely so,' said Mr Greenhough, rubbing his hands with an air of satisfaction.—'Gentlemen,' he added, turning to the baronet and the vicar, 'from information received, as the detectives say, I am able to throw a little light upon the history of the individual in question. By occupation he is a wandering photographer, and in this capacity he seems to have knocked about the world for several years. Chance or design brought him at last to Normanford, and he had not been there many days before he obtained an introduction to Lady Spencelaugh, who, with her customary liberality and kindness of heart, at once gave him several



commissions. The privilege of *entrée* to Belair which he thus obtained, he systematically abused by ferreting out, from the domestics and others, all the information they could give him respecting the private history of the family, supplementing the same by further insidious inquiries among the old people of the neighbouring villages; till having, as he thinks, picked up sufficient information to serve his vile purpose, he deliberately sits down and writes out a statement in which he claims to be heir to the title and estates of Belair. The whole affair would be no more than a piece of wretched absurdity, unworthy the attention of any sane man, were it not for the annoyance which, at a period of deep domestic affliction, it has caused a most estimable lady. But, gentlemen, the comedy, if I may call it such, is not yet played out. This individual, in consequence of an accident, is obliged to take up his residence for a while at Pevsey Bay, from which place he sends his Statement to Miss Spencelaugh, and is so far successful that he induces a lady of whose good sense and discernment I had hitherto had the highest opinion, to espouse his cause. But, gentlemen, the climax is yet to come. The very day after that on which he sends his Statement to Miss Spencelaugh, this man, this impostor as I ought rather to call him, disappears, and has never been heard of since. But shall I tell you why he disappears? Because he is afraid of being arrested and taken to task for previous attempts of a similar kind. Yes, gentlemen, the man himself has gone, no one knows whither—has neither been seen nor heard of for eight weeks; and yet we are seriously called upon to-day to test the validity of his ridiculous pretensions! The whole affair is really too absurd for belief! And Mr Greenhough leaned back in his chair, and glanced at Mr Penning with an air that seemed to say: 'I think, my friend, your case has not a leg to stand on;' at the same time refreshing himself copiously from the baronet's box.

'Then I suppose we may consider this little unpleasantness as at an end?' said the vicar with a genial smile.

'That's right: let's make everything pleasant,' said the baronet encouragingly.

'I beg, gentlemen, that you will not put us out of court in such a summary manner,' said Mr Penning with a deprecatory smile. 'What Mr Greenhough has just urged sounds very plausible, I must admit; but, pray, remember that as yet you have only heard one side of the question. We at once confess that the disappearance of Mr English is a circumstance for which we are unable to account, and one which, at the first glance, may seem to prejudice our case. But putting this fact for the moment on one side, I beg to state seriously and earnestly, on the part of Miss Spencelaugh, that we are prepared with evidence which will go far to prove that many years ago, under this very roof, a heinous crime was perpetrated—by whom, we do not say—and a good man most foully deceived; and if right still be right, and wrong still be wrong, then does it most certainly rest with you two gentlemen, whom the dead master of this house appointed executors of his last will and testament, to do what he himself would have done, had he lived—to mete out, so far as in you lies, simple justice to the living and the dead.'

'I really don't see,' said Mr Greenhough with emphasis, 'that in the absence of the chief—what shall I call him?—conspirator, we can proceed any

further in this business. Let this Mr English come forward in proper person, and we shall then be prepared to hear what he may have to say for himself.'

Mr Penning shrugged his shoulders. 'Do you really wish to force us into a court of law?' he said. 'Miss Spencelaugh thought, and I quite concurred with her, that it was advisable, in the first instance at least, to sift this affair, which deeply concerns the honour of an ancient and reputable family, before some tribunal of private friends; and not make a public scandal of it, unless after-circumstances should render such a course imperatively necessary.'

'You are right, sir,' said the vicar with dignity. 'In the position in which I and my colleague are placed by the will of the late Sir Philip Spencelaugh, we cannot do otherwise than lend an attentive hearing to what you may have to say, and either nip this matter in the bud, if it be based on a lie; or if it have truth for its foundation, see that justice be done to all whom it may affect. Before entering, however, upon any of your proofs, I wish to know, and I daresay my curiosity is shared by others, whom this Mr John English asserts himself to be.'

There was a general stir and movement in the room as the vicar ceased speaking. Lady Spencelaugh's cheek paled perceptibly, but she shaded her face with a hand-screen, and gazed more intently into the fire. Gaston unfolded his arms, and lifted himself for a moment out of the state of moody irritation into which he had fallen. Vague fears of some impending disaster were beginning to coil themselves round his heart. What was the meaning of this dark conspiracy which was gathering so ominously about him at the outset of his new career? The Irish baronet paused, in the act of opening his snuff-box, to listen; and the vicar himself drew up closer to the table, and leaned forward with one hand to his ear.

Then Mr Penning spoke. 'Mr John English,' he said, 'asserts himself to be the eldest son of the late Sir Philip Spencelaugh by his first marriage.'

'But,' said the vicar, recovering from his surprise, 'the late baronet had only one son by his first marriage, Arthur by name, who died in infancy, and lies buried in the family vault.'

'Mr English asserts that he is the child in question,' said Mr Penning; 'and if this be true, he is now Sir Arthur Spencelaugh, and the owner of Belair.'

'Produce your proofs,' said the vicar.

'Things are not looking so pleasant as they might do,' thought the baronet. 'I wish I was well out of this.'

## THE MONTH.

### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE meeting of the British Association, and the successful laying of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable, have been for some time past the principal topics of talk in scientific and engineering circles. We have been so much accustomed of late years to great mechanical exploits, that now that we have daily telegrams from the United States in our newspapers, we accept the result as a matter of course, and the rising generation, as it is called, sees nothing therein particularly remarkable. Nevertheless, the laying of the cable, and the hooking up of the former cable from its bed two miles deep,



are to be regarded as among the greatest achievements of the present century; and to watch their results will be especially interesting to those old enough to remember when heavy ships and sailing-packets were the only means of communication with New York, and the letter-bag was at times six weeks on the passage.

It would not be easy to point out a Presidential address to the British Association which has occasioned more talk or attracted more attention than that of Mr Grove, delivered at Nottingham. Gifted with eloquence in addition to his philosophical and scientific attainments, Mr Grove made an impression which will not soon be forgotten by those who had the good-fortune to listen to his address. He signalled the most striking facts in the progress of physical science which had taken place during the previous year, and shewed where they supported the theory of the *Correlation of Physical Forces*, on which he has himself written so ably. Touching upon a question much debated of late, he expressed an opinion, which, because of its importance, we give in his own words. 'What changes may take place in our modes of applying force before the coal-fields are exhausted, it is impossible to predict. Even guesses at the probable period of their exhaustion are uncertain. There is a tendency to substitute for smelting in metallurgic processes, liquid chemical action, which of course has the effect of saving fuel; and the waste of fuel in ordinary operations is enormous, and can be much economised by already known processes. It is true that we are, at present, far from seeing a practical mode of replacing that granary of force, the coal-fields; but we may with confidence rely on invention being in this case, as in others, born of necessity, when the necessity arises.'

The Board of Trade has adopted the recommendation of the Council of the Royal Society, whom they consulted on the question of meteorological observations; and the Observatory at Kew is to be enlarged, and constituted as the central meteorological observatory for the kingdom, with subordinate observing stations at Falmouth, Stonyhurst, Armagh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen. At all these stations, self-recording instruments of the most approved construction are to be employed. Observations are also to be taken at about sixty other stations, light-houses, and so forth, around the coast, which will afford means of comparison. In this way there will be collected every day a large mass of observations, which will be tabulated and made to give up all they can shew concerning the phenomena and laws of the weather; and following the example set by the Imperial Observatory at Paris, outline maps are to be published every day, shewing the direction of the wind at all the stations. This is a promise of systematic work, which will be hailed with satisfaction by every meteorologist.

The forecasts are to be discontinued as untrustworthy, but the *storm-warnings* are to be kept up; but the Board requires that the officer who hoists the signal 'shall note down at the time, and reduce into exact shape afterwards, the maxims or principles which have guided him in making the *signal of force, or prediction of direction*; the facts to which these maxims are applied; the mode in which he has applied or combined them; the value he has attached to each of them, and the value of the probability he has thus obtained.' We gather from these instructions, that if they are conscientiously

obeyed, there will be obtained, in course of time, a set of rules or principles which will in future impart more of certainty to storm-warnings than they at present possess; and that if the weather phenomena of the British Islands are periodic, this interesting fact will be ascertained.

As in 1860, meteorologists, and, indeed, most other folk, are talking of the present as a rainy year; and since July it has certainly justified the epithet. Even in the first six months, January—June, which were considered fine, there fell 17.08 inches of rain: more than in the whole of 1865. After all, may we not say, notwithstanding the complaints of farmers and others, that if there be an excessive quantity of rain in the present year, it is Nature's way of restoring the balance, and of making up for the deficiency of former years. The rain-fall in Ireland for the quarter ending in June last was 7.796 inches, being respectively 2 inches and 3/4 inches more than in the same quarter of 1865 and 1864.

Another Irish fact is worth mention, inasmuch as it involves a state of things which some political economists have indicated as likely to prove of permanent benefit—namely, a decrease of the population, as shewn by the Report of the Registrar-general. In the three months, April—June of the present year, the number of births registered in Ireland was 38,816; of deaths, 24,763; while in the same period 41,124 persons left the country as emigrants. The result is, that at the end of the quarter, the population decreased by 27,071. It has been often complained that Ireland cannot prosper because of the Irish; and now the occasion of complaint seems to be disappearing—not, however, in quite a satisfactory manner—of its own accord.—Another noteworthy fact is, that in a mountain by Lough Owl, near the line of the Midland Great Western Railway, good iron ore has been discovered, and is being worked with encouraging results.

The visitation of cholera has not only set parish authorities busy with house-to-house inspection, to the discovery of abominations which would disgrace even a heathen community, but it has demonstrated that the good or bad quality of drinking-water has very much to do with the prevalence or non-prevalence of the disease. One of the consequences is, that a committee has been formed of scientific and medical men, who are to stir up parliament to require that the Companies which now furnish water to London shall give a constant instead of an intermittent supply, that they shall get the water from the best possible sources, and filter it before distribution. If this can be accomplished, we shall at least have the satisfaction of drinking wholesome water, while waiting for the grand supply of pure soft water which Mr J. F. Bateman is to bring from the mountains of Wales.

We have all heard from time to time of the endeavours made to utilise the enormous quantities of beef which for years past have been wasted in South America, where thousands of wild cattle are slaughtered every year for the sake of the hides. Hitherto, these endeavours have not been attended by satisfactory results, for concentrated beef proved too dear for working-people to buy, and jerked beef they disliked because of its unpleasant flavour. But a City firm have now announced that they will ere long bring beef from the river Plate as fresh and good as when killed, and sell it in London at

fourpence or fivepence the pound. They have ascertained, by a series of experiments made on the spot, that the meat can be preserved without deterioration of quality and flavour; and by way of demonstration, specimens of the beef, fresh from Buenos Ayres, have been exhibited at a meeting held at the *London Tavern*. If good beef can be supplied thus cheaply, we suppose that by the same process the thousands of carcases of sheep now wasted in Australia could be made available as food.

We hear from Paris that rapid progress is making with the works for the grand Universal Exhibition of 1887. Some parts of the huge building in the Champ de Mars, in which the display is to be held, are finished. Some idea of its magnitude may be inferred from the dimensions of the outer gallery, or *grand nef*, as it is called, which is nearly a mile in circumference, more than a hundred feet in width, and eighty in height. Thus it will be the most spacious exhibition court ever constructed, and we can easily imagine that it has room enough for all the machinery and processes which manufacturers may desire to exhibit. Within this great gallery are the other galleries or zones, ranged concentrically round the centre of the ground, which will be laid out as a garden. The gallery intended for the Fine Arts will be of ample dimensions, and near it will be a smaller one, in which the History of Labour is to be illustrated by an exhibition of tools, machines, and implements, ancient and modern. This part of the show will be as interesting to the antiquary as to the artisan, and it may be expected that even ordinary sight-seers will be able, by comparing the tools of the middle ages with those of the present day, to form a notion of the progress made in the appliances of labour. For exhibiting ecclesiastical furniture, a church has been built, in which the articles will appear with proper effect; and as the Sultan is expected to visit the Exhibition, a kiosk is to be erected for his especial use. The supply of water will be ample enough for cascades and fountains, for the steam-engines and hydraulic machines, and for drinking purposes; and in one corner of the ground considerable spaces are to be prepared for the exhibition of progress in horticulture and in pisciculture. While such are the preparations, we are not surprised to hear that the number of intending exhibitors is already more than ten thousand; but probably some of these will be disappointed, as the Commissioners of the Exhibition have resolved to be strict in their admission of articles for show.

One very important class in the Exhibition series will be that which is to illustrate 'the improvement of the physical and moral condition of the population.' This class will comprehend seven subdivisions, an enumeration of which will give an idea of its nature and scope: 'Materials and methods of infant education; books and materials for adult education; furniture, clothing, and food, combining utility with cheapness; popular costumes of various countries; specimens of cheap, convenient, and healthy houses; productions of all kinds manufactured by working-men, having their own shop, and assisted only by their own family or one apprentice, together with the tools and methods employed by those little masters.' It is easy to foresee that this will not be by any means the least interesting part of the Exhibition.

Besides all this, the Imperial Commission have

announced that they offer ten prizes of L.400 each, 'in favour of the persons, establishments, or localities which, by a special organisation, or special institutions, have developed a spirit of harmony among all those co-operating in the same work, and have provided for the material, moral and intellectual well-being of the workmen.' In other words, any tradesman or manufacturer who has striven to do the best for his 'hands' as well as for himself, may become a competitor for one of these prizes. And in order to reward any 'person or establishment distinguished under this head by a very exceptional superiority,' there is to be one grand prize of 100,000 francs = L.4000.

## AN OCEAN WAIF.

### IN NINE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER VIII.

I CONTRIVED an awning this day, and on we still bounded before the wind, for the breeze held good, keeping as steady as could be. The ladies slept by turns, and watched by turns poor Tom, who seemed, poor fellow, to be getting worse and worse, and we unable to do more than tend him lovingly; and we did, too, for he had been like a brother to me; but all seemed no use, and the poor fellow lay at last quite light-headed. It was no use; I could do no more. I kept up to the very last, and until I felt myself going to sleep every minute, when Miss Mary took the tiller out of my hand, and declaring she could steer, ordered me to lie down.

I didn't want to do so, but I knew I must sleep sooner or later, so I gave her a word or two of instruction, and she promised to call me if there was the least need; and then, with the sun just sinking, I lay down, to be asleep in an instant—a deep sleep, for I was worn out; but I only seemed to have just lain down when I opened my eyes again to see the sun rising, Miss Mary pale and quiet-looking, with her white hands clasping the tiller, and the little boat still going free before the wind.

I jumped up, for I was savage and ashamed of myself, and asked her why she had not woken me.

'I was only too glad to have been of some use,' she said; and then she gave up the tiller; and after Miss Madeline had brought out some of the provision, they both lay down, and had a long sleep.

And so we sailed on for days and days, steering nearly due north, in the hope of making land, or crossing the path of some vessel; and then it fell calm. Poor Tom had been tended with all the care we could give to him, but in spite of all we did, he grew worse and worse; and at last, when he recovered his senses a bit, he was so weak and feeble that we could scarcely catch his words. He talked to us, too, a good deal, and did not seem sorrowful or unhappy, though he said he knew he was going.

'I've been no good to you!' he said to Miss Mary as she was kneeling down weeping by his side one evening when there was not enough air to make the sail flap—'I've been no good to you, but I did what I could.—Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack,' he added, and just managed to take hold of Miss Mary's hand, and put it to his lips; and then, 'Jack,' he says, 'you've had it all

to do, mate, and you've got it to finish; and I won't ask my old mate to swear, but you'll do what's right by them both, won't you?"

"Ay, lad," I said, "I will," and the water came in my eyes as I said it; for he spoke so that I was afraid something was very nigh indeed.

"Then I shall go easy, Jack, mate, for I am going to give up the number of my mess;" and then he was silent for a bit, till Miss Mary sobbed quite aloud, and said she was going to lose a dear, true friend.

"No," said Tom smiling sadly; "only a poor sailor, miss, as tried to do his duty by you, and broke down; but Jack here will take my watch for me; and God bless you all, for I don't think I shall see the sun go down again."

"Come, Tom," I says, "try and look up, mate;" but it was done in a cheerless way, and the poor fellow only smiled sadly.

"It was that chap Hicks as did for me, mate," he said; and then he looked hard at me, and we understood one another, for he looked as he did that morning when he told me to wash the blood off my face; and somehow or other I could not help feeling glad I had made an end of the villain who gave my poor mate his death-blow.

And poor Tom lay half-sleeping, half-waking, all that calm night, and I watched by him till just as the sun was beginning to rise, when he seemed to quite wake up, and stared out towards the east, as if he had been called.

"What is it, mate?" I says, lifting his head on my arm, and taking his hand.

"Tell 'em I'm ordered aloft, Jack," he whispered; and then, with quite a smile upon his face, my poor mate closed his eyes, and dropped off into his long sleep; and there, with the sun shining upon his face, I didn't know it, he went off so quietly, till I heard the young ladies sobbing behind me, when I gently laid his head down, and sat at his side with my face in my hands for some time, for Tom Black and I were old shipmates.

It was a sad blow that to fall upon our little ship's company; but I did all as I knew my poor mate would have liked, and as I know he would have done by me. I lashed him up in one of the sheets, with a shot at his feet—one that had been in the boat for ballast—and at sundown, Miss Mary said some prayers over the poor fellow, and then, with a more sorrowful heart than ever I felt before, I hove my poor mate overboard, and then sat down in the bows, feeling as if I didn't mind how soon it was me as was called, till I thought of what I had promised poor Tom, which was to do my duty by them as was in my charge; when I roused up, tried to make all ship-shape, and waited for the wind, which soon came; and away we dashed again all that night.

#### CHAPTER IX.

"Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack," said poor Tom, and I did; and taking turn and turn with me, Miss Mary gave me a watch below, or, of course, I could not have held up; and one day—the second after poor Tom went—I was dreaming about what was the case, namely, that our supply of water was out, when I felt my arm shook, and waking up in a fright, I found that Miss Mary had thrown the wind out of the sail, and there she was, looking frightened and horrified-like at a vessel standing right across our course.

"Oh, what shall we do?" she cried.

"Frigate," I says, "man-o'-war," as I took a good look at the stranger.

"What! not the *Star*?" she exclaimed, clasping her hands.

"No," I says, taking the tiller, and running down towards the stranger; but though we were out of water, I could not help doing it with a heavy heart, for it seemed that a great change was coming. But those two loving hearts were together, and when I saw them praying, I kept my eye upon the frigate, and would not shew what was passing in my own mind.

In a couple of hours, we were alongside, and our boat was hoisted on board, and the ladies had a cabin given up to 'em; but it fell to my lot to tell the story of our sufferings, and I did to the captain and some of the officers, for it was a Queen's ship. I saw the captain frown more than once, and he got up in a hasty, fretful way, and began to march up and down the room till I'd done, when he says: "My man, we must have you, if you'll stay with us."

A few days after, we were at the Cape, where the captain stopped to land the ladies, of whom I had seen but very little since we went on board the frigate, for they hardly left their cabin, though it was wonderful what respect the officers paid them, and how kind every one was to me, specially when they saw how them two ran to speak to and shake hands with me when they did come on deck.

I thought it all over; what the captain had said, and all about it; and I went to see the ladies once, by their own invitation, while they were staying at a gentleman's house; and I felt more low and sad than ever when I saw them dressed in deep mourning, for it brought all the scenes up again of that unlucky voyage; but I tried to rouse up, for though no scholar, and only a sailor, I knew as it was now time to wake up from a sort of wild dream as I had been in.

So I said "Good-bye" to them, and they both cried at our parting, and made me promise that I would go to see them when I was in England; for I knew that their passage home was taken, and I had made up my mind what was best; and I told the ladies I was going to join the frigate. It was a sad afternoon that, and they seemed both of them cut to the heart to say "Good-bye," and I was too. But the words were said at last, and they each gave me a little ring to wear upon my handkercher for their sake; and then, when I was coming away, Miss Madeline first put both her hands in mine, and put her face up as naturally and tenderly as a little child would, and kissed me; and then Miss Mary put both her hands in mine—little white soft hands in my rough horny palms—and she, too, with a childish, loving innocence, and with the tears running down her cheeks, said "Good-bye," and she, too, kissed me as a dear sister would a brother.

There was a feeling as of something choking in my throat as I too tried to say the parting words, for I was now quite awake from the sort of dream that of late had come on me at times, and I hurried away.

We did not return to England for two years after that; but before I had been ashore—almost as soon as we were in port—there was some one on board as wanted to see me, and I was soon standing face to face with a tall, sharp-eyed, officer—

looking gentleman, who told me his name was Captain Horton; and he shook hands heartily, and thanked me for what he called my gallant behaviour to his sisters. He said I was to go and see them, and left the address; and when he went away told me, and gave it me on paper, that there was fifty pounds for me in one of the banks whenever I liked to draw it; and also, that I was never to want for a friend while he and his sisters lived; and then he shook hands, and left me standing thinking of the bygone, and looking at the packet he left with me.

I took and opened that packet, and there was a handsome silver watch in it, and a five-pound note inside a letter, which was written and signed by Miss Mary; but there was a great deal in it as coming from her sister. It was a letter as I didn't feel it a disgrace to drop a few tears on; and it was like that kiss, such a one as a dear sister would write to her brother. It said I was to go and see them; and there was a good deal in it about the sad past, and what she, too, called my gallant behaviour, when it was nothing more than my duty. She said, too, that they would ever pray for my welfare, and begged that I would wear the watch for their sake, while I was not to think the less of it because it was not of gold, for their brother thought that a silver one would be the more suitable present.

And that part somehow seemed to hurt me, for it was like saying a silver one was more suited for a man in my station, which was quite right; but for all that, it seemed to rankle, though I knew at heart as the letter was all tenderly and lovingly meant. But all that went off again; and the letter, and the note in it, and the watch, lie together in my chest; and so sure as I take 'em out and look at them, I get in that dreamy way again; and at times, in the long watches far away at sea, there's a bright face with golden hair floating round it, which seems to smile on me, and it's there too in calm or storm; and when I've hung over the bulwarks thinking, and calling back all the troubles of that sad voyage, I've thought, perhaps, that if I had been something better than a common sailor, what I felt might have been Love.

And now you have it all down, sir, though I can't tell you what became of my old ship, though I've always thought as she went to the bottom, from being badly handled.

#### THE CLIFF SWALLOW.

O'er eddying pool, and swift wide reach  
Of river, flits a speck,  
Darts through the rain-squall, skims o'er meads  
Which dancing shadows fleck—  
My pet cliff swallow! yet their charms  
How little dost thou reck!

Five hungry bills, ten beaded eyes  
Peer from their airy dome—  
That bright red cliff where sunshine sleeps,  
And purest breezes come;  
Thy hurried flight is all to feed  
These little ones at home.

And yet, methinks, at eve's soft glow,  
When wakes the vivid green  
Above thy colony, that glee  
May in thy flight be seen—  
That winged with lighter motions then  
Thou cleav'st the blue serene!

Or when beneath the vast chalk bluffs,  
Daring the crested waves,  
Thou sweetest, snatching ocean-joy  
Where most the full tide raves;  
Surely thy heart within thee leaps  
To thread those dripping caves.

A sudden curve—a flash of gray—  
Thy merry pinions rise,  
O'erleap the cliff, sail down the comb,  
Chase burnished dragon-flies;  
How sweet to float where willow-weeds  
Bend to the brook's low sighs!

Unlike thy kith and kin, no thought  
Of man resides in thee;  
No partnership of home with us  
Thou choosest, but to be  
Alone with nature all thy days,  
And as the wild winds free.

We men must slowly change our place;  
We live too near the earth,  
And yet our souls can rise and claim  
Than thou still higher birth;  
Can live and work by reason's rule,  
And smile with truer mirth.

What brings thee to our northern lands,  
In paler sunshine clad?  
Cannot the rich-spiced Indian air  
Suffice to make thee glad?  
Or doth the East's magnificence  
Oppress and leave thee sad?

We ask; but thou art silent; e'en  
That clime we may not know  
Which every autumn thou dost seek,  
Where wintry winds ne'er blow;  
But lo! next spring our well-loved streams  
Thy swift reflection shew.

And though thou wilt not trust thy nest  
To men, nor near their homes;  
Thou fittest closely by him, when  
Beside thy haunts he roams;  
Thou fittest gently, as might one  
To whom no ill thought comes.

The swift may circle round the spire;  
The martin hang her nest  
Beneath my roof-tree; overhead  
The swallow sun his breast;  
Yet dearer thy retiring ways,  
Thy quick wing scorning rest.

Cliff swallow, ne'er shall hand of mine  
Disturb thy silent flight;  
I hold thee dear for happy days,  
Cheered with thy presence bright;  
I call thee friend, though 'neath my eaves  
Thou never wilt alight.

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